

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 1 on page 12, with the following paragraph:

If both the working router and the protection router are configured with the same network address (e.g., IP address), the two routers can appear as a single “virtual” router to other devices on SONET ring 20. Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating a virtual router representation of the working and protection routers of Figure 2. Virtual router 30 is coupled to neighbor router 33 via Packet over SONET interface module (PoS) 31, SONET ring 20, and PoS 32. PoS 31, as an abstraction of PoS ~~36~~ 26 and 28, represents or utilizes the same IP address assigned for PoS 26 and PoS 28 of Figure 2, whereas PoS 32 is configured with a unique IP address. Accordingly, virtual router 30 appears to neighboring router 33 as a single routing device rather than two cooperating routers.